

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

GRANT # ACEI-127-13

PROGRESS REPORT - 2023

Submitted by

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BACKGROUND

Gilmore Lake is a 389-acre groundwater drainage lake in northern Washburn County that receives heavy recreational use. Despite a continuing CBCW inspection program, Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) was discovered in 2009. Gilmore Lake Association (GLA) immediately began a collaborative program with the WDNR to detect and control EWM as well as educate lake users about it and other AIS.

Our first grant for Early Detection and Rapid Response (AIRR-17-10) extended from September 2009 through 2012. GLA was then awarded this Established Population Control Grant (ACEI-127-13) covering 2013 through 2017. Sufficient funds remained from the Rapid Response grant to support work through 2014 with consent of WDNR. GLA reported progress on this project in years 2015 through 2017. Funds remained as of the original expiration of the grant, and GLA applied for and received extensions each year from 2018 through 2023. Progress reports were filed as required from 2018 through 2022. This report covers 2023.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project is to control the EWM infestation in Gilmore Lake and preserve the lake's ecological integrity, aesthetic experience, and recreational value. To that end, the project has the following objectives:

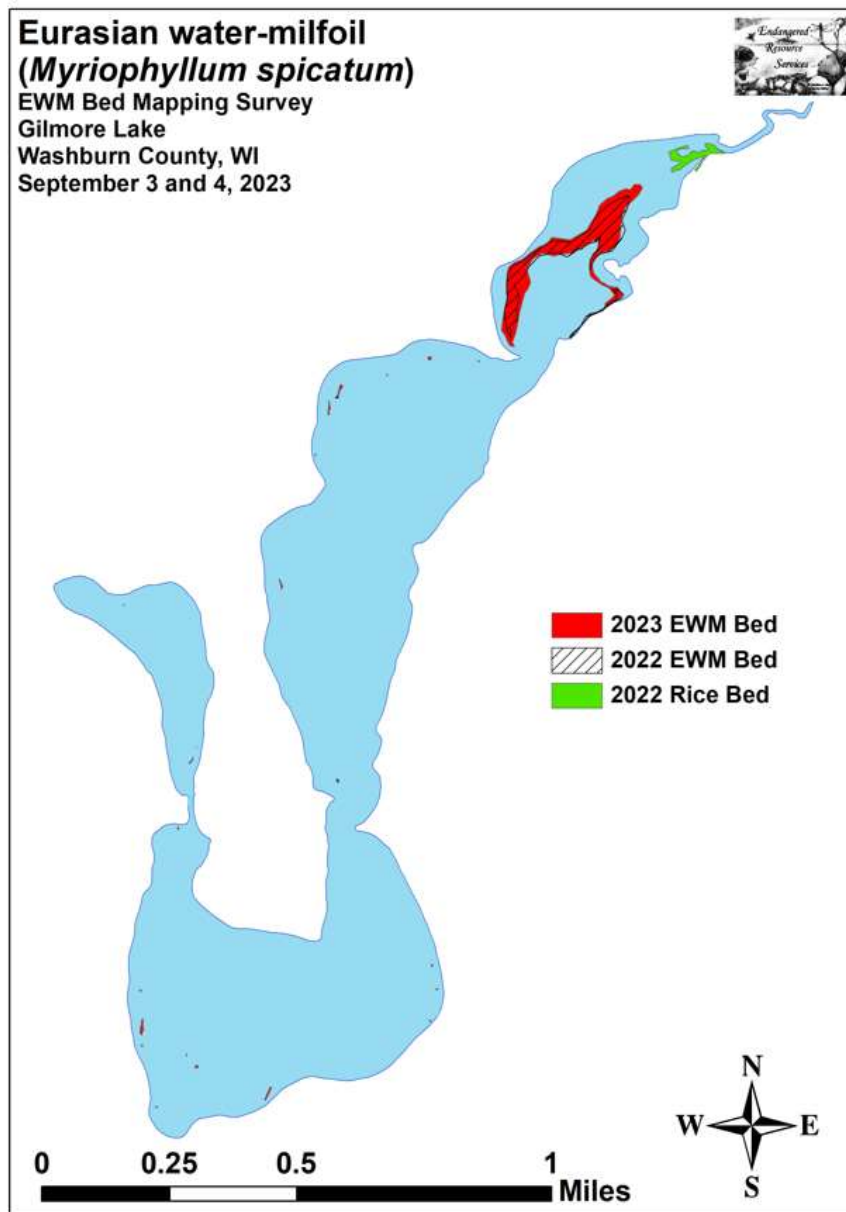
1. Detection – To identify and map the full extent of EWM in Gilmore Lake and its response to control efforts.
2. Control – To use appropriate means to contain, reduce and where possible, eliminate EWM colonies.
3. Prevention – To prevent introduction of other AIS and export of EWM from Gilmore Lake
4. Education – To instill Gilmore Lake users with understanding and appreciation of our lake ecosystem.

SUMMARY OF 2023 ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS

As in previous years, GLA volunteers monitored the distribution of EWM by visual inspection of potential colonization sites via meandering boat surveys. These were conducted frequently from May through mid-September. They were performed by members of the GLA Milfoil Committee, all of whom were trained in EWM identification. EWM beds treated with ProcettaCOR in 2021 (six beds in the south basin and one nearby in the central basin) remained devoid of EWM two years later, although native plants were abundant and diverse on those sites. Unfortunately, beginning around 2020, EWM has taken over a large area of the north basin.

Aquatic Plant Distribution

Based on findings of the 2022 EWM surveys and bed mapping, EWM was present in four beds covering 7.65 Acres, the largest of which (7.30 acres) being located in the north basin. The 2023 survey and bed mapping conducted in early September 2023 identified 24 beds with a total of 10.8 acres, with 10.37 acres in the north basin. This significant growth in size of the large bed in the north basin (+42%) was measured after the beds were treated with DASH over three days. Thus, there is concern about the rapid expansion of EWM in the north basin and its contribution to establishing many more colonies around the littoral zone of Gilmore Lake.



Treatment

Despite the inability to treat EWM with herbicide in the north basin, GLA has not undertaken herbicide treatment since 2021 in other areas of Gilmore Lake due to the resounding success of the ProcellaCOR treatment of seven acres in that year. Based on the infestation of EWM in the north basin, GLA requested permission to treat the north basin with ProcellaCOR or another herbicide, and were not permitted due to proximity of wild rice. In consultation with WDNR, a treatment plan was developed to include herbicide use in most parts of Gilmore Lake, but excludes such use in the north basin due to concerns by WDNR and its partners (GLIFWC and St. Croix Ojibwe nation) over the presence of Wild Rice at the northern most area of the lake near the outlet to the Totagatic River. Upon recommendation of Lake Biologist, Pamela Toshner, GLA undertook a DASH treatment which occurred over three days in August 2023 treating two beds in the north basin identified in the July 2022 survey. DASH treatment resulted in removal of 387 cu.ft. of biomass. The post-treatment report from Aquatic Plant Management LLC of Minocqua, WI is attached. GLA also utilized diver removal services from Aquatic Plant Management LLC in September 2023 to treat smaller EWM colonies in the south and central basins of Gilmore Lake.

Education and Prevention

GLA participates in the Clean Boats Clean Waters initiative through the Minong Town Lakes Committee every year. We educate our property owners through our semi-annual newsletters and annual meeting. They learn to identify EWM and about the importance of cleaning boats and physical removal to prevent spread of EWM and other AIS.